Head Full Of Chemicals

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/51079069.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter
Additional Tags:	Getting Together, Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane, Hurt Will Graham, Soft Hannibal Lecter, but in his own twisted ways, Angry Will Graham, Hurt/Comfort, Child Neglect, (vaguely implied) - Freeform, mischa angst, (subtly), Angst, Whumptober, no beta we die hannibal's resolve when will is around
Language:	English
Series:	Part 24 of Whump Is My Design
Stats:	Published: 2023-10-24 Words: 1,181 Chapters: 1/1

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by WordsAblaze

Summary

> “I’m sorry,” he offers quietly.
>
> Will flinches as if the words had been a physical blow, and shakes his head. “I trusted you. I trusted you.”
>
> “I know,” Hannibal replies, his voice low, “and I cannot express how honoured I have been to __”
>
> “Honoured?” Will scoffs, malice evident in his tone despite the way his voice cracks halfway through the word. “Do you consider it honourable to… to destroy me like this?”

Notes

> i'm soft for guilty!Hannibal changing his plans upon seeing Will one (1) time so we're doing that again <3

See the end of the work for more notes

It hadn't been difficult to conclude that Will's childhood had been a lonely one.

Quite frankly, all it took was one careful look at the ever-growing collection of strays he houses. Of course, as a psychiatrist, Hannibal had taken careful looks at far more than that before forming his conclusion, but he remains of the opinion that the dogs would have been telling enough even without the rest of his analysis.

As soon as he'd formed that conclusion, though, it simply hadn't left his mind, wiring itself into the very chemistry of his brain, and Hannibal had thus noticed a whole host of traits and quirks that seem to have stemmed from the deep-rooted loneliness of his developmental years.

The most obviously related—one that he's *achingly* familiar with—is Will's reluctance to let people in, to let people past his self-proclaimed forts. So when they stand on either side of what is really no more than a glorified cage and Will looks up at him with false words but strikingly honest tears, Hannibal's heart stumbles over its next beat.

For a moment, Baltimore State Hospital is a cold, snowy landscape, and a soft voice whispers words of endless trust and blind faith and a painful kind of hope. For a moment, there are small fingers curled around his pinky finger as the rattling of chains and the echoing of gunshots fills the air. For a moment, an awful, weighted guilt topples all the way through his stomach until he's filled with the nauseous urge to tear out his own organs.

The moment passes, but the tears in Will's eyes remain.

Hannibal swallows heavily as he realises the depth of his mistake; it's not that he regrets the lives he's taken or the necessity of forcing someone else to take the fall, but there's no satisfaction to be found in having forged himself an entrance to Will's defensive forts only to tear down each of the walls and leave only rubble in his wake. Such intimate destruction is, although magnificent, not how he'd envisioned their time together concluding.

He waits until the trees around them transform back into concrete pillars before taking a step closer to the bars. "I'm sorry," he offers quietly.

Will flinches as if the words had been a physical blow, and shakes his head. "I trusted you. I *trusted* you."

"I know," Hannibal replies, his voice low so as not to be picked up by the microphones, "and I cannot express how honoured I have been to—"

" *Honoured?* " Will scoffs, malice evident in his tone despite the way his voice cracks halfway through the word. "Do you consider it honourable to… to *destroy* me like this?"

He doesn't, so he says as much.

Although Will looks surprised at his sudden honesty, he remains stiff, guarded. "I've never—you were the first person I… welcomed into my life. It's no secret I struggle with that but you

—you were—you were *supposed* to be *different* . You weren't supposed to be just like *everyone else,"* Will all but hisses at him.

High-pitched wails echo through his memory palace but Hannibal forces them behind closed, locked doors and steps further towards Will, close enough for the other man to spit at him if he so desires. "I'm not like everyone else, Will."

Will shakes his head before leaning forwards, his sorrow sharpening into a cruel disbelief. "I *trusted* you to take care of me, Doctor Lecter. And you *failed* ."

Just barely resisting the urge to flinch, Hannibal exhales softly. "I have always done only what I believe to be best for you."

"I never—I don't need anyone else to make decisions on my behalf." Will harshly wipes his eyes with the heels of his palms. "I am *tired* of being left behind afterwards."

"That is the last thing I would ev—"

" *Don't,"* Will interrupts, taking a few shaky breaths before continuing. " *Don't* lie to me. You can—you are free to leave and I will not hold it against you. I couldn't. But please, *please* , I need—I need to know if it's true."

When Hannibal frowns, Will curls his arms around himself, tearing his gaze away to stare at the floor. It takes him a ridiculous amount of time to decipher Will's words, and the weighted nausea rekindles itself somewhere behind his lungs the second he does.

"You want to know whether you killed Abigail," Hannibal murmurs.

Will flinches again, squeezing his eyes shut, and, had their settings been slightly different, Hannibal may well have confessed everything there and then. As it is, all he can do is sigh. "Will…"

"Please, Hannibal," Will rasps, " *please* . Did I—? Was I no better than—?" He cuts himself off with a stifled sob, and it's unclear whether he's referring to his own father or Abigail's, although both possibilities are equally as painful.

Against his better judgement, and knowing that the reply will have consequences that echo years into the future, Hannibal takes a deep breath and nods for the sake of the camera whilst whispering: "No."

Will's eyes snap open and he frowns, his eyes searching Hannibal's until they widen and his entire frame seems to slump in on itself. "Don't lie to me," he repeats slowly, more carefully this time.

"Never again," Hannibal replies, his voice low, hoping that he's managing to convey his sincerity as well as he desperately hopes to. "I really do want what is best for you, Will."

"Just like everyone else?" Will asks bitterly.

Before his guards can rise back to their full height, Hannibal offers up a small smile, the same kind he'd softly offered up in the dead of winter all those years ago. "Entirely *unlike* everyone else, I assure you."

He can almost *hear* the cogs aligning in Will's beautiful mind as doubt and hope explosively collide, and he knows Will has understood what he's promising—never to let Will feel so alone again for as long as they both live—when the other man nods, clenching his jaw and pinching the bridge of his nose.

"Trust me, Will. *Please* ," Hannibal adds, because he honestly thinks he may not survive letting someone so precious to him down for a second time. He wishes they were anywhere else, where he could pull Will close and personally brush aside his tears and bite away any lingering remnants of loneliness.

"I don't forgive you," Will replies eventually.

Hannibal smiles, this time speaking loudly enough for any third parties to also hear him. "I ask only that you allow me the opportunity to earn your forgiveness for any actions of mine that may have wronged you."

Will narrows his eyes, his gaze remaining cold just long enough for doubt to creep into Hannibal's thoughts, before he nods his head once, sharply. He rubs his tears away with the heels of his palms once more before clearing his throat, pulling himself a little further upright and leaning a little further forwards, an indecipherable glint in his eyes.

"In that case," he says carefully, "I need your help."

End Notes

some day i'll write a fic where Mischa lives and isn't just a source of angst. today is not that day.

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